

Religiosity, Gender Vs Value priorities

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The present study was to investigate whether religiosity and gender have significant contribution on value priorities among Sawla Senior Secondary School students in Gamo Gofa Zone. A stratified random sampling technique was used to collect data from 345 students. A self-reported questionnaire comprising value priorities scale items and religiosity scale items, focus-group discussion, and semi-structured interview were employed to collect data. Result displayed that there is significance difference in the value priorities of male and female students. Females tend to value more of tradition, benevolence, and conformity values whereas males tend to value more self-direction, achievement and stimulation values, Pearson r revealed that there is a significance correlation between value priorities and religiosity. As the degree of commitment to religion increases, people tend to value more of tradition, conformity, benevolence values and tend to give less emphasis to self-direction, achievement, and hedonism values. The FGD and semi-structured interview results also supplement such findings. Hospitality, education, trustworthiness, and tolerance were found to be maintained. And procrastination, selfishness, ethnicity, terrorism and dependency were found to be some of the values that need to be changed. The socialization process in the family, the sex roles, stereotypes, personality differences, unique life experiences, temperaments and the culture in which one belongs play the major role in value priorities. These results highlight teachers in the schools, parents in the family, religious leaders in the Church/Mosque, social science researchers and community leaders need to work collaboratively in enhancing the acceptable, "good" values.

Keywords: Religiosity; Gender; Value Priorities

Currently, the issue of value is one among the most important concerns of many professionals in the world. To Schwartz (2003) values are concepts that pertain to desirable end-states which transcend specific situations and guide selection of behavior and are ordered by relative importance. Habtamu (1994) maintained that values influence aspirations, efforts, attitudes, motivations, interests, predispositions, and actions of people (individuals, groups, institutions, communities and nationalities).

There are several researches conducted world wide with regard to values (e.g., Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992; Kluckhohn,

1961; Hofstede, 1980; Morris, 1956). However, when we come to our country, to the knowledge of the present researcher, there are only few researches conducted in relation to Ethiopian "dominant values" (Korten, 1972; Habtamu, 1994). The two important studies were conducted at least before a decade. A gap, it seems is perceptible which this study attempts to fill in. Furthermore, they focused only on the "dominant" Ethiopian culture. However, values are learned from the specific culture in which one belongs and Ethiopia is a mosaic of cultures. In addition, though stable and relatively enduring, values tend to change with time and changes in socio-economic systems. The findings of Korten indicate that

Ethiopians have integrative values such as hospitality, respect for privacy and disintegrative values of individualism, and personal expediency. On the other hand, Habtamu (1994) observed that Ethiopians have “good” values of helping each other, education, wisdom... and “negative” values of ethnicity, selfishness etc.

Researches (Malpass, 1974; Struch, 2002; Consalvi, 1971; Schwartz, 1992 and others) indicate that there are variations among individuals in prioritizing values across ages, sexes, religious groups, social classes, educational levels, occupational levels, and ethnic groups. Values and value systems are thought to be transmitted by different social institutions. One of such social institutions is religion. Furthermore, the socialization processes in the family or the broader culture could bring differences in the value priorities of boys and girls. Hence, the purpose of the present study was to examine the association of gender, religiosity, with value preferences, in a relatively heterogeneous set of value statements among Sawla Senior Secondary School students in Gamo Gofa Zone, SNNPR

Psychologists traditionally conceived of values as phenomena mainly linked to personality types, such as dogmatism, authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, and Machiavellianism (Allport, 1928). Sociologists, on the other hand, thought of values as chiefly related to society’s collective consciousness, which determines social conduct. Values are assumed to be at the core of self-concept and to influence thought and action in many ways. They are assumed to transcend more specific attitudes toward objects and situations, but they influence the form that these attitudes take (Rokeach, 1973). They provide standards to evaluate actions and outcomes, to justify opinions and conduct, to plan and guide behavior, to decide between alternatives, to compare one’s self with others, to engage in social interactions, and to present one’s self to others.

Therefore, the study of human values is important to the understanding of culture, socialization, psychological make up and life orientations of individuals. Moreover, it helps the development of the individual, and the society. At the individual level, value priorities are the key to a person’s beliefs, attitudes, and behavior specifying what is preferred. At the cultural level, value structures of different cultural groups enable one to understand and attributes characteristic of the particular culture (Lyons, Duxburp & Higgins, 2005).

Objectives:

(i) To examine whether there is a statistically significance difference in the value priorities of male and female students. (ii) To investigate whether there is a significance correlation between religiosity and value priorities. (iii) To identify the causes for any observed differences in value priorities between male and female students. (iv) To explore some “good” values that need to continue and “negative” values that need change.

Method

Sample:

The total population contained 2,720 students of which 1,386 were males and 1,334 were females. 345 students (175 males and 170 females) were randomly selected using stratified random sampling technique for the study.

Tools:

Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ): Schwartz’s (2003) It was the base for the development of the present instrument. 56 statements with 5 point scale was developed. To establish content validity, the developed statements were presented to 8 professionals in relevant areas to maintain their judgment as to how each statement was in agreement with respect to the construct under consideration. The judges were comprised of professionals or instructors from

Psychology Department and from Sociology Department of Jimma University. They were required to give their replies under the alternatives a. agree b. disagree c. remark. Besides, the judges were also required to provide their comments with regard to items to be included, irrelevant items, and overlooked areas. At this stage, the content validity of the PVQ scale was developed. Statements which got 60% and above agreement of the judges were selected for the study. Hence, 6 of the items were discarded and 50 remained to be used for the pilot study.

On the data collection for the pilot study involving 50 students, Cronbach alpha item reliability of the scale was computed to find out inter-item consistency. Accordingly, 8 items which had less contribution to the final correlation were eliminated and 42 items were left for the final study with inter-item consistency reliability of alpha 0.75. Finally, the PVQ used in this study includes 42 indexes, one for each of the ten basic values (self-direction, tradition, universalism, power, conformity, security, benevolence, achievement, stimulation, and hedonism). There were six items to measure universalism, and four for the other nine basic values. For each values type, the mean importance rating given by an individual to the single values which represent that type was used as the index of its importance.

Religiosity scale: It was originally developed by the present researcher. Items were 30 at the initial period with 5 point scale options. The same procedure of PVQ was applied to evaluate each item and maintain content validity. The same judges evaluated the items for the scale. After the evaluation, 27 items which got 60% and above agreement were accepted for the pilot study. After the pilot study, Cronbach alpha was computed to find inter-time consistency and only 20 items were within the acceptable correlation to the total

scale and succeeded for the final study with reliability 0.77.

Semi-structured interview: This was conducted to obtain further information from students. To meet this objective, four participants' two males and two females were interviewed. They were selected purposively with respect to their willingness. Certain steps were undertaken to gather the necessary information from the interviewees. Establishing rapport with the participants in creating conducive psychological environment was helpful in eliciting more ideas during the interview. The interview format was delivered to them ahead so as to help them get prepared to deliver reliable information and to be ready both mentally and physically. During this session, the time, the place, and the procedure of the interview were determined. Actually, the time was a working time altogether, and unit leader's office was the place where the interview was undertaken. The interview lasted for two hours. Gathering the data took place after brief introduction of the self.

Focus group discussion: FGD was employed to maintain additional information. The FGD team composed of 12 individuals (participants) out of which 6 males and 6 females were purposively selected with respect to their willingness. The discussions for boys and girls were conducted separately. The main points of the discussion were on value priorities. The participants were expected and allowed to freely discuss their ideas in relation to value priorities and the reasons behind individual or group differences in value priorities. Credit was given to each participant to contribute something to the FGD. The discussion was chaired by the researcher and it was carried out in the unit leader's office in a working time. The discussion lasted for two hours with 30 minutes tea break in between.

Results

Table1: t-test Comparison of Male (N=175) and Female (N=170) Students on 10 Values

Values	Group	Mean	SD	t
Self-direction	Male	3.3271	.5201	.00*
	Female	1.8132	.5933	
Power	Male	3.2729	.5700	.00*
	Female	1.9176	.6012	
Universalism	Male	2.0210	.8508	.94
	Female	2.0284	1.0099	
Achievement	Male	3.0557	.3587	.00*
	Female	1.9750	.5558	
Security	Male	2.0343	.9332	.95
	Female	2.0397	.8511	
Stimulation	Male	2.9986	.3980	.00*
	Female	1.7309	.7231	
Conformity	Male	1.7086	.7227	.00*
	Female	3.1794	.5770	
Tradition	Male	1.5843	.9111	.00*
	Female	4.2368	.9881	
Hedonism	Male	4.8771	.4419	.00*
	Female	1.4368	.6684	
Benevolence	Male	2.1214	.9681	.00*
	Female	4.9294	.4470	

p<.05 **

As shown in Table1, men tend to give more priority to self-direction, power, hedonism, achievement, and stimulation values whereas women tend to give more priority to tradition, conformity, and benevolence values. And both men and women tend to give almost equal weight to security and universalism values. This finding is in agreement with the previous findings of Rokeach (1973), Feather (1984), Bond (1988), Beutel and Marini (1995), and Di Dio, Sarajgovi and Abube (1996)

Table 2 indicates that correlation of religiosity were most positive with tradition (.763) values, and most negative with hedonism (-.544) values. The correlations were also positive with security (.460), conformity (.28), universalism (.27) and benevolence (.270) values. The correlations were also negative with stimulation (-.500), self-direction (-.126), achievement (-.365) and Power (-.219) values. This result is in harmony with the studies made by and Schwartz and

Houseman (1995). As the degree of commitment to religion increases, people tend to value more tradition, security, conformity and benevolence values and tend to value less hedonism, stimulation, achievement and self-direction values.

Table2: Correlation of Religiosity with Importance Attributed to 10 Values (More Religious)

Variable	Pearson	Pearson r
Tradition	.763	.000**
Conformity	.28	.029*
Benevolence	.270	.037*
Security	.460	.000**
Hedonism	-.544	.000**
Stimulation	-.500	.000**
Self-direction	-.126	.336
Universalism	.27	.036*
Power	-.219	.093
Achievement	-.365	.004**

p<.01 **, p<.05*

Table3: Correlation of Religiosity with Importance Attributed to 10 Values (Less Religious)

Variable	Pearson	Pearson r
Self-direction	.506	.000**
Power	.385	.003**
Universalism	.061	.909
Achievement	.270	.044*
Security	-.46	.737
Stimulation	.470	.000**
Conformity	.389	.003**
Tradition	-.520	.000**
Hedonism	.443	.001**
Benevolence	-.265	.048*

p<.01**, p<.05*

Table 3 shows that correlation of religiosity were most positive with self-direction (.506) values and most negative with tradition (-.520) values. The correlations were also positive with stimulation (.470), power (.385), hedonism (.443), universalism (.061), achievement (.270), and conformity (.389) values and negative with benevolence (-.265), and security (-.46) values. This result is similar to the findings of Rokeach (1968), and Schwartz and Huisman (1995). As the degree of commitment to religion decreases, people

tend to value more self-direction, power and hedonism values and tend to give less emphasis to benevolence, tradition and security values.

The results of FGD and interview with key informants evidenced that hospitality, respecting each other, cooperation, trustworthiness, rationality, self-confidence, education, wisdom, tolerance of others ideas, being broad-minded, transparency, accountability and responsibility as some of the most important values to be maintained whereas procrastination, gossip, selfishness, ethnicity, terrorism, attribution of problems to others, harmful traditional practices, rigid thinking, dependency, suspiciousness, and corruption are some of the unacceptable values that need to be changed. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Lipsky (1962), Korten (1972), and Habtamu (1994).

In general, the social approvals and sanctions in the family, the community, and the broader culture; the differential allocation of adult roles; sex roles; sex role stereotypes; folktales; different stories; evolved predispositions; personality differences; and the different reinforcement and punishment systems [positive or negative] might in one way or another contribute their part in gender differences in value priorities as discussed in the interview and FGD sessions.

Recommendations

It is highly recommended that educators attempt to inculcate desirable values at the primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels. This is because it is highly suggested that education brings changes in values particularly from tradition to modern. Teachers can transmit "good" values through modeling good behaviors, praising students for their good values; engaging students in discussions; telling didactic stories and delivering homilies by way of posters, banners and murals displayed throughout the school; rewarding children immediately, consistently, and typically in front of their peers so that others can get motivated to repeat their friends'

habit. Socializing agents such as the family and the mass media need to focus on the development and encouragement of appropriate values and the discouragement and protesting of the retarding values. Ethiopian social psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, social historians, and others are expected to engage in sustained collaborative work to unravel the mysteries of gender differences in socialization of the different values. A disregard of investing on children is certainly a total fiasco on the parts of society for the future of society depends on its willingness and commitment to invest on its children. Thus, giving trainings to the parents, religious leaders, and community leaders; conducting various researches and workshops are some of the tasks to be carried out by the aforementioned scholars that might possibly decrease the traditional gender stereotypes.

It is suggestible that religious leaders are supposed to focus on the socialization of achievement, self-direction, and independence values in addition to the particular values that are favored (universalism, benevolence, tradition, security and conformity values). More, broader and perhaps national level studies should be conducted by social science researchers on value priorities versus age, educational level, occupation, and social-economic status.

Conclusion

It appears that gender has substantial effect on the value priorities of male and female students. The values relational, expressive, yielding, nurturing and communal were considered more typical of women and the values autonomous, instrumental, and agentic were considered more typical of men. There is a significant correlation between religiosity and value priorities. As the degree of commitment to religion increases, people tend to give more weight to tradition, conformity, and benevolence values, and less weight to self-direction, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, and power values. The

priorities that individuals attribute to different values tend to reflect their socialization experiences, their temperaments, personalities, unique life experiences, and the surrounding culture in which they live. Hospitality, respecting each other, cooperation, trustworthiness, rationality self-confidence, education, wisdom, tolerance, transparency, accountability, responsibility, broad-mindedness, and cooperation were stressed to be some of the "positive" values that need to continue.

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